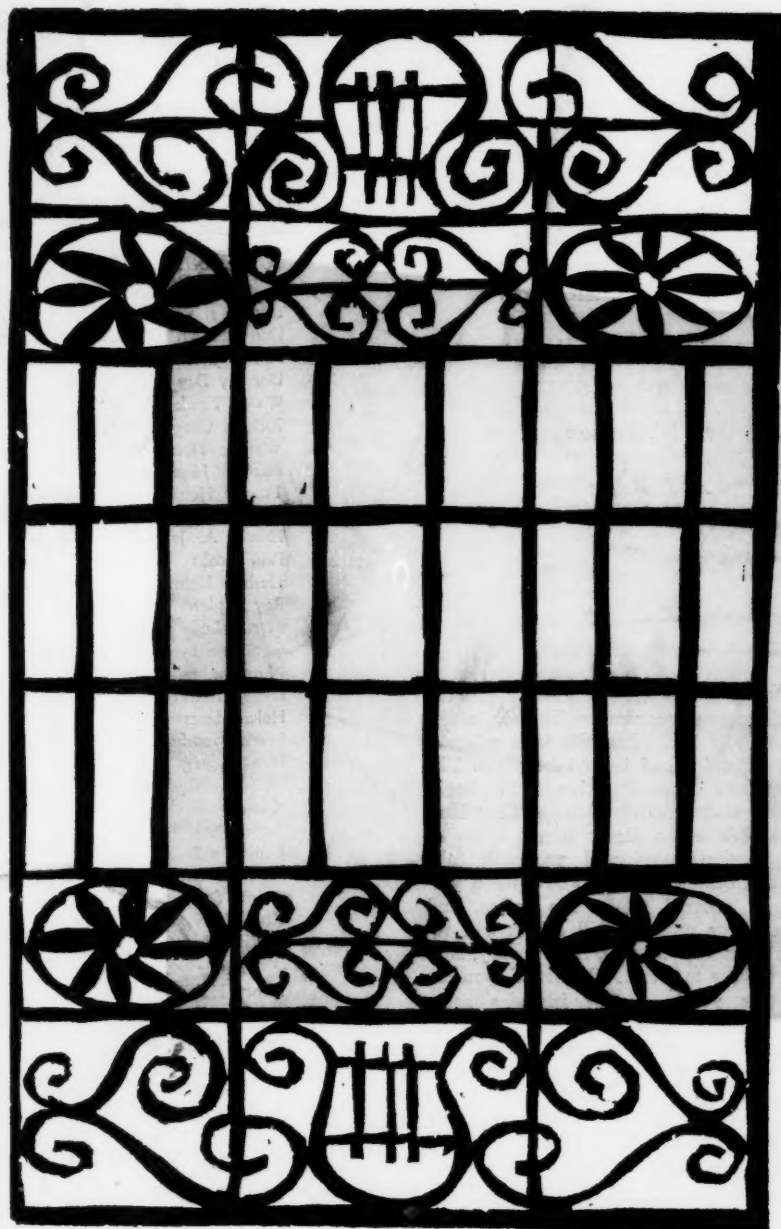


LIBERATION

APRIL 1960

30c



REVOLUTION IN CUBA

Robert Alexander Kenneth Boulding Douglas Gorsline

WHY I REFUSE TO PAY INCOME TAXES

A. J. Muste

THE LONELY UNION REFORMER

H. W. Benson

LIBERATION AN INDEPENDENT MONTHLY

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CONTENTS

Vol. V, No. 2

Editorials	3	
Violence and Revolution	5	Kenneth Boulding
Contradictions of the Castro Régime	9	Robert J. Alexander
Cuban Microcosm	12	Douglas Gorsline
Intellectuals and the Lonely Union Reformer	14	H. W. Benson
Not So Long Ago (Part XXIII)	17	A. J. Muste

In This Issue:

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Residents of New York City, and others who wish to join them, will have a chance to strike a blow for sanity by

taking part in a mass protest against the civil-defense program on Tuesday afternoon, May 3rd, when the next compulsory air-raid drill is to take place. The nonviolent demonstration will begin with a leaflet distribution, at City Hall Park. When the sirens sound, some of the demonstrators will promptly take shelter; others will do so only when personally ordered to by the police, and then under protest; still others will refuse to move, and will, if necessary, submit quietly to arrest. The list of sponsors of this year's protest includes some distinguished names in the fields of education, journalism, and the arts. For further information, write to, or telephone, the Civil Defense Protest Committee, Room 10, 158 Grand St., New York 13, N. Y. (WA-5-9415)

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OUR EDITORS IN THE FIELD

Editors of *LIBERATION* have again been called upon to devote large blocks of time to important nonviolent action projects here and abroad. Bayard Rustin is on "detached service" from the War Resisters League to serve as personal secretary to Martin Luther King, Jr. and as executive director of the Committee for the Defense of Martin Luther King, Jr. and of the Struggle for Freedom in the South. The somewhat cumbersome title of the committee is due to the fact that its purpose is not only financial and legal support of King against the phony charge of perjury in connection with income tax returns which he faces in Alabama, but to provide financial, moral and political backing for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in its various nonviolent activities, including direct action to secure the vote for Negroes, and the student sit-ins, to which the S.C.L.C. gives inspiration and support. The student movement is not only one of the most hopeful and significant developments in American social and political life, but also of global significance as one phase of the struggle of the Negro people wherever they live for freedom, equality and self-respect. *LIBERATION* will continue to provide first-hand reporting and analysis on developments in the South. We remark here parenthetically that it was pacifist organizations immediately after World War II, and somewhat later CORE also, that carried on projects in nonviolent direct action in the racial field, circulated Gandhian and other literature on the subject, and quietly trained a considerable number of people, all of which is now bearing fruit.

Here we shall elaborate briefly on an important conference being held in Accra, capital of Ghana, from April 7th through April 9th. The governments of Ghana and Morocco took the initiative in calling this conference and aroused interest in it in the governments of other independent African states as well as the popular movements for independence in other parts of the continent. This editor has gone to Africa at the invitation of the organizers of the conference to serve as a nonvoting delegate and consultant. Also in Ghana

in the same capacity is Rev. Ralph K. Abernathy, chairman of the Montgomery Improvement Association, and close associate of Martin Luther King during the Montgomery bus protest and in the S.C.L.C.

The Accra conference is an aftermath of the International Sahara Protest team project of last fall and winter, led by Michael Scott which sought to prevent the first French atomic test. As had been predicted, when the explosion took place, protest from the African and Arab world flamed up. Michael Scott remained in Africa, deeply convinced that the world, and Africans especially, must stop the French nuclear imperialist adventurism in Africa and the opening of membership in the gruesome nuclear club to an unlimited number of new member states at the very moment when the world's peoples were crying for an end to the nuclear-arms race. He travelled throughout North and West Africa laying his concern before government leaders and others. His persistence and consecration helped crystallize African opposition to nuclear testing.

The Accra conference is to discuss the general question of "positive nonviolent action for peace and security of Africa" and two specific projects: further nonviolent action against continued French testing and building of missile sites in Africa, and the possibility of establishing training centers in nonviolence in Africa.

Our readers should understand that this is not a conference of Africans already fully committed to nonviolence and simply concerned to see if some specific projects can be planned and executed. There will be differences of opinion about nonviolence among the delegates and different degrees of commitment and training among those who basically incline to the nonviolent strategy and philosophy. At the Tunis conference of the very influential All-Africa People's Conference, in February, a resolution was carried—unanimously, it seems—providing for the organization of an All-Africa armed brigade to help the F.L.N. in its violent struggle against France in Algeria. This was a surprising and disappointing action in view of the fact that at its founding convention in

Accra only a little over a year earlier, the A.A.P.C. had taken a strong position for nonviolence as the strategy to be used in the African struggle for independence. Apart from moral considerations, this armed-brigade idea seems a harebrained one on purely practical grounds. Speculation necessarily, therefore, arises as to the political motivation behind it—apart from the readily understandable emotional revulsion against both French refusal to grant independence to Algeria and the French policy of setting up its nuclear establishment on African soil. What will be the attitude in Accra in April of those who voted in Tunis, in February, for armed intervention in Algeria?

Obviously, the brutally repressive policy of the South African régime will further pose the question as to whether there is a viable nonviolent alternative for those who will no longer passively submit to slavery enforced by machine guns.

In view of these circumstances, the outcome of the Accra conference cannot be predicted in advance. It may not achieve any concrete result. It may, on the other hand, prove a turning point in the history of Africa, and therefore of mankind. A grave responsibility rests upon the interpreters of nonviolence who have been asked to attend.

A. J. M.

STUDENTS COME TO LIFE

A current story has it that when students at a large women's college in New England recently informed the president of the college that they were going to picket on behalf of Negro students in the South, the president was so pleased that she got out her automobile to drive around and watch the picketing. (She was later nearly arrested when her car went through a red light.)

It has been many years since anything has stirred American students to any kind of public demonstrations. Many teachers and administrators had begun to wonder if such student demonstrations would ever occur again. Now Negro students in the South have started a chain reaction, and groups have been formed in more than a dozen big northern colleges and universities to engage in direct actions. At Yale, Harvard, Brandeis and Wesleyan especially, students have started to move.

April 1960.

This is so far only a preliminary stirring. The days when thousands of students would get out to protest against war or the draft are still in the past. But now we suspect that they are also in the future. When students discover that they can act on any issue, the nucleus has begun to exist for actions on other issues. Students have a stake not only in the race question, but also in the question of war and peace. Nonviolent protests against segregation are becoming nation-wide. The day is coming nearer when similar protests against the army and the rest of the military establishment will also become a reality.

R. F.

THE POWER TO DESTROY

In his autobiography this month, A. J. Muste tells of his encounters with the Internal Revenue Service over his refusal to pay income taxes because over half the money collected is used to pay for war production. Another tax refuser is Eroscanna Robinson, recreational director of a Chicago community center and noted athlete. (She was selected to represent the United States in a track meet against Russia, but she declined because she felt that her participation, as a Negro, would give the false impression that Negroes have achieved equality in this country.)

On January 27th, Miss Robinson was sentenced to jail until such time as she would agree to cooperate with Federal District Court by producing records of her income. She refused, because she is unwilling either to pay for instruments of death—hydrogen bombs, poison gases, flame throwers, etc.—or to cooperate with the government in its efforts to extort the money from her.

Miss Robinson's arrest set off a round-the-clock picketing vigil outside the Chicago jail and demonstrations in front of the offices of the Internal Revenue Service in Washington and New York. On February 18th, she was sentenced to a year and a day for "criminal contempt."

Since her incarceration on January 27th, Miss Robinson has refused to eat. April 15th (deadline for filing of tax returns) was the 80th day of her hunger-strike. After twenty days the government began to force-feed her through a tube inserted in her nose. At present she is being held incommunicado in the Federal women's prison in Alderson, West Virginia.

Clergymen, representatives of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, friends, and family have all been denied the rights to visit her, to get letters in to her, and to receive mail from her. The Bureau of Prisons defends its denials by pointing to Miss Robinson's refusal to conform to prison regulations. No tyranny can operate without the consent of the governed, and we congratulate Miss Robinson on the unusual strength of her refusal to be tyrannized. By their very nature prisons are barbarous relics which have no place in a humane society. Whether a person is incarcerated for anti-social activity outside the anti-social mores of society (such as robbing from banks rather than through banks) or, like Miss Robinson, for refusal to acquiesce in anti-social practices enshrined in our culture, his or her imprisonment serves no valid purpose. Rather it represents a desperate and self-righteous effort on the part of society to avoid facing up to the problems raised in a crude form by its malcontents or in a noble form by its Eroscanna Robinsons.

In Miss Robinson's case, the drama of her arrest and non-cooperation will challenge many persons to ponder questions that it is more comfortable to ignore. A. J. Muste tells on page 18 how he was finally impelled, by the tax-refusal stand of another woman, to take the stand he had been on the verge of taking for several years. The best way we can honor Eroscanna Robinson for her courageous action is by being a little more courageous ourselves in examining the tax-refusal position.

We know of no better words to ponder in such an examination than those of Henry David Thoreau, from his "Essay on Civil Disobedience":

Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? . . . If the injustice . . . is of such a nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law. Let your life be a counter friction to stop the machine. What I have to do is to see, at any rate, that I do not lend myself to the wrong which I condemn. . . . As for adopting the ways which the state has provided for remedying the evil, I know not of such ways. They take too much time, and a man's life will be gone. . . . Any man more right than his neighbors constitutes a majority of one already.

Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight. If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood . . . If the tax-gatherer, or any other public officer, asks me, as one has done, "But what shall I do?" my answer is, "If you really wish to do anything, resign your office." When the subject has refused allegiance, and the officer has resigned his office, then the revolution is accomplished.

On May 14th, a group of Peacemakers and sympathizers will go to the prison at Alderson to begin a sit-down and fast at the prison gates in protest against Miss Robinson's imprisonment and in support of her stand. I am planning to be there, and hope that some of you will join us in this attempted liberation. For further information, write to Mrs. Marjorie Swann, 2845 Sussex Road, Treviso, Pennsylvania.

D. D.



Liberation

VIOLENCE and REVOLUTION

Kenneth Boulding

THE OCCASION of these reflections was a brief visit to Cuba in February of this year. I was invited by the Minister of Finance to give a lecture and hold discussions on economic development. I was in Havana for four days, with a brief drive through the immediate countryside. I gave an evening lecture, and two subsequent evenings were spent in questions and discussions. My contacts were mostly confined to the young men in the Ministry of Finance, and to the Minister, Senor Rufo Lopez Fresquet. These reflections must not, therefore, be taken as in any way authoritative. They are indeed reflections of a briefly caught image in the somewhat troubled waters of my mind. Nevertheless, the revolution in Cuba has an importance far beyond the island of its origin. It stands as a symbol for many hopes of millions of people all over the world. It is important, therefore, that we should reflect upon even an imperfect image.

I was received with great hospitality and courtesy, and I talked freely with a good many people. Nevertheless, one could not help feeling a certain undercurrent of tension. The revolution was a violent and bloody affair, even though it may not have been as violent or as bloody as the dictatorship which preceded it. There is a sense of having overcome great odds and also a certain sense of insecurity. It is impossible not to feel sympathy with the young men of the revolution. It is a young man's revolution—a revolution of the puritan young against the corrupt old. The average age of the revolutionary cabinet is thirty. I met the Minister of Communications, who is twenty-seven and looks seventeen; the Minister of Finance, at forty-eight, is the "greybeard" of the cabinet. There is a sense of hope coupled with fear in the air.



The atmosphere is not wholly unlike that of the days of the early New Deal in the United States.

One is reminded somewhat of the Mexican revolution of 1910, though that revolution in many ways was bloodier and much more bitter. The dead in the Cuban revolution are counted in the hundreds, or, at most, in the thousands. In the Mexican revolution, the dead were counted in millions. Like the Mexican revolution, this is a revolt against dictatorship, corruption and *latifundia*. It is also a revolt against foreigners and foreign domination. There are two important differences: the Mexican revolution, to some extent, was a revolution of the indigenous Indian population against a Spanish élite; in the case of Cuba, there seems to be little or no racial element in the revolution, presumably because the racial composition of Cuba is so much more homogeneous. The second difference is that the Mexican revolution was profoundly anti-clerical and even anti-religious. There seems to be no such element in the Cuban revolution, perhaps because there was not the same problem. The church in Cuba was not the enormously powerful landowner it was in Mexico. It is largely an urban institution, and it has a strong element within it which is favorable to the revolution. The Cuban revolution has presumably strengthened the social-action wing of the church as against the more aristocratic and conservative hierarchy. But it is not in itself either anti-clerical or anti-religious.

The heart of the Cuban revolution is land reform, and its principal instrument is the National Institute of Agricultural Reform. This is a sprawling, hastily created organization with a great many functions. It establishes stores and schools, put up innumerable notices around

the countryside, and prepares to organize the distribution of land from the old large estates. Not much land has been distributed as yet, and the big test is still to come. It will be surprising if an organization so large and so hastily constructed does not run into great inefficiencies. It will be surprising also if many local injustices do not occur. Nevertheless, the organization is a symbol of the revolt of the countryside against the city. And this, in a sense, is the core of the revolution. Perhaps one should say that there are three revolutions: the revolution of the young against the old; the revolution of the middle class against the landed aristocracy; and the revolution of the country against the city. It remains to be seen whether these three revolutions can be combined or whether one will ultimately triumph over the other two. The revolution of the young against the old is, of course, doomed by the simple process of time. The conflicts between the other two revolutions may be much more fundamental.

Revolutions of the countryside against the city are an ancient phenomenon, and they are of particular importance in Latin America by contrast with the United States, where the essential unit of the society is the small town. In most Latin-American countries, a sharp differentiation has developed between the culture of the city, especially of the capital city, and that of the countryside and the rural areas. Havana, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and Buenos Aires are brilliant capital cities of the European kind. The countrysides which support and feed them are miserable and poverty-stricken. This is highly characteristic of that state of man which has been described as civilization; civilization, after all, is what happens in cities, and in societies with merely civilized techniques, the brilliance of the city is bought at the cost of the degradation of the countryside.

The revolution of the country against the city, however, is always either unsuccessful or disastrous. If it is unsuccessful, civilization survives; if it is successful, the result is disastrous. The city is overthrown; the country is still no better off. Most modern agrarian revolutions have been mainly unsuccessful and therefore only partially disastrous. The pattern is as follows: the great estates are divided among the landless laborers, and a society of small peasants is set up. In the beginning, this may work fairly well, for the size of the farms is adequate to support a family. However, there is no known method of checking the increase of a peaceable rural population. Since there is little surplus from agriculture, the growth of the cities is stifled, and the growing populations stay behind on the farms. The farms are divided and subdivided until finally they are too small to support a family, except in extreme poverty. Often the result of an agrarian revolution is that the economy of the country separates into two halves: the peasant half, which is utterly miserable, and a civilized

half, in which the remaining large estates are efficient enough to produce enough food surplus to feed the capital city and maintain small industrial development. This roughly seems to be the Mexican pattern. At its very best, a successful agrarian revolution condemns a society to a developmental process with a low horizon. At its worst, it results eventually in desperate poverty and starvation.

The Cubans seem not to be unaware of these problems. They are determined at the moment to avoid what they call "*minifundia*" as well as "*latifundia*." *Minifundia* consists of peasant farms too small to afford a decent living or efficient production. The size of the new farms, therefore, is to be of the order of sixty acres. In the circumstances of Cuban agriculture this may not be too bad, though one should reflect that in the Middle West the size of the efficient family farm is now about three hundred acres. On sixty or seventy acres, however, a Cuban peasant should be able to enjoy a modest living for himself and his family. He will not be as rich as the Iowa farmer, but he will certainly be better off than he is today. The question is, however, can this survive? The health revolution which has hit the tropics in the last fifteen years and has had such an extraordinary impact is still to make its full impact on Cuba, but it will not be long in coming. This means, in the first generation at any rate, a fall in the death rate to ten or below while birth rates stay up in the forties, giving a rate of population increase of 3% per annum. Cuba, it is true, can afford this increase better than most countries; it is not as desperately overpopulated as the British West Indies or Haiti. Nevertheless, a 3% per annum increase in population means a doubling in a little less than twenty-four years. This rate of population increase puts an enormous strain on the country's educational resources and on its ability to invest in human resources. One can see the small farms becoming *minifundia* in less than fifty years if there is not a large outlet for surplus rural populations in industrial cities. This outlet may develop, of course. Cuba is in a pretty good position geographically, and with the health revolution in the tropics there is every likelihood that industry will move into the tropics in the next fifty years on a quite unprecedented scale. Cuba probably has the best chance of any Latin-American country (with the possible exception of Brazil and Argentina) of "making the grade" and moving into an advanced 21st century economy. Cuba can afford to make mistakes in a way that the British West Indies, for instance, cannot. It has a place to go in a way that Haiti has not. Nevertheless success is not assured; just one mistake too many and Cuba will go the way of Haiti, that little land of utter tragedy.

The middle-class revolution is a good deal more promising than the agrarian revolution, especially if it is waged by the educated, technically trained middle

class, rather than the traditional *bourgeoisie*. The American middle-class revolution was a success because eventually it made almost everybody, even the farmer, middle-class. Puerto Rico is a good example of a little country that had its middle-class revolution twenty years ago and has made a roaring success of it. A common pattern for this type of revolution is beginning to emerge, oddly enough, under several different ideological banners. Its kingpin is an enormous stress on education, especially technical education, and on the development of human resources. Next in importance in this pattern is the development of import-export industries, based fundamentally on some differential advantage of its human resources. In the early stages, these industries may have to be attracted by special means, such as tax concessions, but the only permanent solution is the development of industries based on high-quality human resources. There must, of course, be accumulation of physical capital and there must, in the long run, be population control. But these things may follow from the development of human resources. High-quality human resources attract capital the way honey attracts bees, or perhaps one should say, bees attract honey. Along with high-quality human resources goes, of course, skill in organization, and it is organization, not labor, which is the principal source of wealth.

Where in all this stands Communism? In Cuba the question is a real one, for it would seem that the threat of Communism is not empty. The answer seems to be that Communism is a bigoted and dogmatic version of the middle-class revolution, hampered by an obsolete social science. The success of Communism (where it has success) is due to the fact that even the second-rate and the bigoted middle-class revolution is better than none. The chances for success for Communism in Cuba, however, strike me as very slight, if only because of its geographical position. If Cuba goes Communist, it will either be occupied or quarantined by the United States. The United States can even less afford to have a Communist Cuba than Russia can afford to have a capitalist Hungary. Of the two alternatives, occupation would be a minor disaster for Cuba; quarantine would be a major disaster. If Cuba were to become an *estado libre asociado* of the United States like Puerto Rico, its economic future would be indeed bright. Puerto Rico has scored a substantial success with very limited natural resources. Puerto Rico is a tropical Ozarks; Cuba is a tropical Iowa. If Puerto Rico becomes the fifty-first state, and the United States Congress, like the legislature of New Mexico, becomes bi-lingual so that membership in the United States does not require subservience to English-speaking culture, Cuba could have a very decent future indeed as the fifty-second state. This might be the long-run effect of occupation. If, however, Cuba were quarantined like Haiti, it is highly doubtful whether it would

be able to develop industry out of its own resources, and fifty years of population increase and sub-division of farms and the absence of any import of organization would soon reduce it to the Haitian level. For the Cuban's own sake, therefore, in view of their geographical position, one hopes that the middle-class revolution will not develop into its East European variant.

What now of violence? The question is of some importance to the readers of this journal. The Cuban revolution was a violent revolution in the quite traditional sense of the word. There was nothing nonviolent about it. If it was less bloody than some, this was a matter of good fortune, not of principle, and it is not clear that the good fortune will continue. Once a tradition of violence has been established, we know it has a way of continuing, and revolutions have a way of eating their own children. It is true perhaps that the violence of this revolution played only a small part in its ultimate success. The Batista régime collapsed from within. The eighty or so revolutionaries who landed, of whom only twelve survived, (magic number) could not possibly have overthrown so well established a dictatorship with such a powerful army and secret police if the mass of the people had not simply withdrawn their support from the old régime. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that without violence the revolution would almost certainly have been delayed and it might have taken a very different turn. The tradition of violence in Latin societies is a puzzling phenomenon. Lewis D. Richardson once calculated that the chance of a man coming to a violent end was much greater if he spoke Spanish than any other language. One can hardly believe that the mellifluous and gentle language produces this remarkable effect, but there must be something in the Spanish cultural heritage which leads to an acceptance of violence as a solution to problems. Sir Grantly Adams, the Prime Minister of the West Indian Federation, advised the Cubans that if they would only play cricket this horrid violence would cease. One doubts if this is the sole answer. Violence, however, is a habit and a bad habit, and it is hard to see how it can be broken except by the clear and widespread image of its evil consequences, and by the development of alternative methods of social change. There can be little doubt in my mind that the violence of the Cuban revolution is a real handicap to it. It is not merely that violence produces counter-violence, and that those who are violently dispossessed will react violently. The greater danger is that violence produces a state of mind which seeks short-cuts to the solutions of difficult and involved problems. One sees this clearly in the agricultural reform. The man of violence sees the problem in simple moralistic terms; the big landowners are rich and perhaps corrupt, the landless countrymen are poor and deserving. The solution then is simple: we dispossess the rich and distribute

the land to the poor. Unfortunately, society is not so simple and justice is not so simple. It is one thing to take land from the rich, this is fairly easy; it is quite another thing to give it wisely to the poor. It is easier of course to give it as spoils to the deserving soldiers of the revolution, but there are not many of them, and after them, to whom? Any attempt at a once-and-for-all solution of the problem of distribution of property is almost doomed to produce acute social dissensions and gross injustices. Society is an organic thing, and development is likewise an organic process. Even justice is not a once-and-for-all thing to be established by legislative fiat. It is something which has to be worked out in the enormously complicated processes of interaction of man with man, of man with law and of man with society. The violent man takes the short-cut, but the short-cut often lands him in a bog. Violence can do a good deal, but it cannot change the laws of arithmetic, and it can only modify very slightly the great laws of social change. The nonviolent approach takes the long view; it seeks to establish justice through taxation, through inheritance laws, through manipulating the whole ecological process of society; it seeks to untie the Gordian knot because it needs the string. Violence, however, is itself part of the ecological process; it cannot be wished away or preached away, and still less can it be abolished by violence. It will be abolished only as new and more satisfactory images and ideologies take the place of those which now exist.

In my lecture in Cuba, I said that an ideology of revolution could not be an ideology of development. Revolution may be compared to the sexual act, which fertilizes the egg of the new society and in which overtones of violence are frequently present. The growth of the egg, however, requires an entirely different situation. It requires the warmth and security of the womb, which is the most nonviolent place on earth.

I must conclude with a note about the symbol of the revolution, Fidel Castro. I did not have the privilege of meeting him, but I saw him through the eyes of his followers, and I saw his picture displayed, not in the vulgar pattern of dictatorship, but almost as an ikon in simple homes and stores. The eyes of a man of sorrows stare at one out of the picture, and the resemblance to a somewhat unconventional picture of Christ is startling. Here, however, is a Christ with a gun and a holster, a Christ fighting his way from the beach to the mountains to the capital to the triumphant entry. The face is the face of Christ, but the hips are the hips of a cowboy, and the combination of the two most powerful symbols of the western world is powerful indeed. In the minds of his followers, Castro clearly inspires the reverent devotion, for this is no palace revolution. Castro is a deep and important symbol and a prophetic figure whose importance may eventually stretch far beyond the boundaries of his own island. Nevertheless, the very power of the

symbol makes one afraid; the very power of the man makes one afraid. Man is not made for overmuch righteousness and the corruption of the righteous is more deadly than the corruption of sinners. One fears a new outbreak of denunciations and purges. The purity of the revolution must be unsullied by any human weakness or any intractability of society. The great tragedy is that the symbol which is so meaningful internally may have tragic consequences externally. The man whom the Cubans see as their saviour, the outside world may see as a paranoid. One holds one's breath and hopes.

In all this the gravest danger is from the United States. Congress is touchy and public opinion easily inflamed. If Americans do not realize the profound nature of the Cuban revolution and its deep importance as a symbol for the world, and especially for Latin America, they may be led into action which could have disastrous consequences. The situation is complicated by the fact that Cuban sugar is, in effect, subsidized by the United States. The subsidy may not be as large as we think, but it is there and substantial. There is going to be a lot of sugar around in the next ten years, and if Cuba has to sell on the world market things will be difficult, though in the long run such a necessity might force Cuba into a more diversified agricultural economy, which would be all to her good. The agreement with Russia is of no great benefit to Cuba's sugar industry. The Russians agree to buy a million tons at the world price. The Cubans can sell in the world market at the world price anyway, and although the Russian purchases may raise the world price a little, this rise would happen whether they bought from Cuba or not. The Russian loan is another affair. This is very cheap money and quite a substantial loan. One wonders what the Russians will get out of it, except prestige, but it may be of substantial benefit to Cuba. The danger is, of course, that the uncertainty developed by this relationship will scare away other sources of support and investment, so that the net effect will be negative. If this is the case the Russian loan may actually hamper Cuban development. On the other hand, if the Cubans play their cards well, this does not have to happen and there can be net gain. I should add that I am not wholly confident that the hand will be played well, but at least this is not impossible. It is not impossible also that the United States will play its hand well. The difficulty with the United States, however, is that it has too many cards and will not know which one to play, and it will be fatally easy to play the wrong ones. Here the simplest play is probably the best: a genuine concern for the welfare of all the Cuban people. This will involve patience in the face of provocation and some careful re-thinking of long-term policy. The reflections on this subject, however, will have to be in a clearer and stiller pool.

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE CASTRO REGIME

Robert J. Alexander

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION is over a year old. Some of the basic lines which this spectacular movement is taking are now clear. However, some of its objectives and its significance still remain mystifying, even to a fairly close observer of events in the island republic. Certainly, many of the acts of the régime could not but arouse sympathy among all men of good will. But others must raise serious doubts in the minds of democratic onlookers.

The old Cuba was a country which depended to a distressing and dangerous degree on the cultivation and export of a single crop, sugar. This crop alone provided employment during four to five months a year to a million of the six million inhabitants of the island. The rest of the year, it employed half that number, creating what has been one of the basic problems of the nation, the seasonal unemployment of a large part of its working people.

Cuba depended on sugar for more than half of the dollars and other foreign currency she earned abroad. A very large part of the government's budget came from the same source. Basically, the prosperity or depression of the whole economy was a function of the price of and demand for sugar.

One of the great crimes of the governments preceding that of Castro was their failure to take any really significant steps to develop a more diversified and balanced economy. Although grazing, coffee, tobacco, some mining and certain manufacturing industries supplemented sugar as creators of national income, they were not sufficiently important to alter the basic situation.

The rural situation was complicated by the fact that the land of Cuba was held in relatively few hands. The great majority of the rural workers owned no land at all. Huge sugar estates had tens of thousands of acres which, generally highly productive and efficiently managed, left the great majority of rural Cubans with little or no economic stake in their nation.

Politically speaking, Cuba has suffered chronically from dictatorships of varying intensity and brutality. The only exception to this was the period from 1940 to 1952, which comprised the latter part of Batista's first period in power, and the administrations of the two presidents belonging to the Autentico Party, Ramon Grau San Martin and Carlos Prío Socarras.

The progress towards establishing a solidly-based democracy was brought to a sudden end on March 10, 1952, when Fulgencio Batista again seized power, by means of a military *coup d'état*. He was at the time candidate for president in elections scheduled for early in

June; but it was universally agreed that he had no chance of winning—so he took power anyway.

Throughout his nearly seven years of control of Cuba, the people of the island steadfastly refused to recognize him as the legitimate ruler. Although the first reaction of most Cubans to his *coup* was one of consternation and frustration, underground revolutionary activity began within a few weeks of the March 10 "*golpe*."

The Batista régime responded to the tenacious opposition of the average Cuban citizen by becoming increasingly brutal. During the last two years of its tenure, it is estimated that some twenty thousand persons were killed in cold blood by the police and members of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM). The record of terror, torture and murder of the Batista régime has been equalled by few of the Latin-American dictatorships of this century, and has been surpassed only by that of Generalissimo Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic.

Not only was the Batista régime dictatorial and brutal but it was exceedingly corrupt. This weakness it shared with virtually all of its predecessors. Ex-President Grau San Martin was indicted after leaving office for having stolen or permitted to be stolen some hundred and eighty million dollars. Batista, in his first period of office, may have got away with as much as sixty million dollars, and many times that amount went into his pockets and those of his friends between 1952 and 1959.

It is against this background that the Castro Revolution must be judged. The young men and women of the 26th of July Movement came to power determined to change fundamentally the social, economic and political life of their nation.

Most fundamental has been the agrarian reform, which is attempting to put an end to the large land-holding problem. According to the law approved last May, no one can hold more than a thousand acres of land, or in exceptional cases, thirty-three hundred acres. Land held in excess of this is to be expropriated and paid for with twenty-year bonds, bearing not more than 5% interest.

The land taken from large holders is to be given to landless peasants or to those with amounts below the minimum called for in the law. Each beneficiary of the reform is to receive sixty-six acres free, and is to be able to buy ninety-nine acres more, which the landowner must sell him.

Some of the land is to be given as freeholds to the peasants. Other segments are being organized into cooperative farms, to be administered by agronomists and

other technicians appointed by the *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria*.

The *Instituto* is seeking to diversify greatly the country's agricultural output. The objective is to make the country as self-sufficient as possible in both foodstuffs and agricultural raw materials. To give but one example, it hopes to substitute Cuban-grown cotton for the cotton hitherto imported from the United States as the raw material for Cuba's textile industry.

Most of the work of industrialization will probably be undertaken by the government or by Cuban *entrepreneurs* with government aid. However, it is worth noting that in spite of all the furore aroused by expropriation of United States properties by the revolutionaries, a number of contracts have been signed in recent months with United States and other foreign firms for the establishment of factories in Cuba.

Other reforms have been undertaken by the Castro government. The social-security system has been completely reorganized, with the establishment of a single Social Security Bank to replace the crazy patchwork quilt of more than thirty special funds for groups of workers in separate industries. The tax system has been simplified, with the consolidation of the more than a hundred and fifty separate taxes existing a year ago into about twenty imposts; while at the same time the whole tax system has been made more progressive. The Castro régime has launched a large-scale construction program, building schools, hospitals, roads, sewage systems and houses. Much of this effort has been concentrated in the rural areas, which had been virtually abandoned by previous régimes.

Finally, the educational system has been reorganized and is being expanded. When Castro came to power there were five thousand unemployed school teachers. When the new school year opened in September, all of these were back at work. Special attention is being given to training new teachers, so as to attain as nearly as possible the objective of having every Cuban child of school age in school.

No one of good will could seriously object to these basic elements of the Revolution's program. However, there are certain disquieting aspects.

The first question concerns the régime's intentions with regard to the establishment of constitutional and democratic government. In this writer's opinion, one cannot expect that after a revolution as profound as that which has occurred in Cuba, elections would be held within less than two or perhaps three years. However, it is to be expected that a group which has made a revolution in the name of democracy would announce within a reasonable period when it intended to submit itself to the vote of the citizenry.

Various reasons have been offered for not making such an announcement. Leaders of the Castro régime have said that an election held too soon would give an exces-

sively large majority to the 26th of July movement. It has been pointed out that the revolution requires a great deal of legislation, which a *de facto* government can enact quickly but which would take much longer if the government had to go through the process of obtaining parliamentary approval. It has also been argued, somewhat more speciously, that the people don't want elections, and that, anyway, past elections have been corrupt and elections in general have a bad reputation in the island.

This is all true, in whole or in part. However, it still doesn't mean that if a democratic régime is to be restored, it is not important for the government to announce its intentions concerning how this is to be accomplished. Furthermore, there are some indications that Castro is confused as to what democracy is all about. For example, he has addressed crowds of several hundred thousand people and asked them such questions as whether military courts should be re-established to try civilians. When he has received the expected roar of assent, he has argued that this is democracy, that he has in fact consulted the people.

Of course, he has done no such thing. There is a vast difference between getting a reply from a well-staged mass rally and consulting the people in the secrecy of the voting booth.

The same attitude is reflected in Castro's touchiness about criticism, particularly when it arises from within his own ranks. He has treated those within the 26th of July movement who have disagreed with him in a very cavalier fashion. Thus, before dismissing President Manuel Urrutia (which he could have done with two words), Castro humiliated and broke the man. When Major Huber Mattos urged Castro to modify his policies, Castro had him put on trial and sentenced to twenty years at hard labor, even though Mattos had made no move against the government other than to offer to resign his commission.

Finally, one aspect of the régime's treatment of the press also raises doubts as to its democratic intentions. The decision of the Printers Federation to insist on a rebuttal after every article at all critical of the régime that appears in any Cuban newspaper, together with the virtual confiscation of the newspaper *Avance* and exile of its publisher when he refused to go along with this decision, are certainly not in the democratic tradition.

Another somewhat disquieting aspect of the Castro régime is its intromission of the military into civilian spheres of activity. Not only have military courts been given wide jurisdiction over offences committed by civilians, but army officers have been put into key positions of authority in essentially civilian activities. The *Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria* is almost an army monopoly. Its top officials are military men, as are its chiefs in most provinces and municipalities.

It has been argued that the rebel army is not really

"The Army", that it is different in essence, that it is really a group of civilians who happen to wear uniforms. The extensive jurisdiction of military men over civilian affairs, it is argued, is therefore not really an evidence of militarism. However, whatever their origins and reasons for entering the rebel army, the men involved are now military men under army discipline, and, particularly in a *de facto* régime such as that of Castro, the civilians are helpless to check any tendency towards arbitrary action which may be indulged in by the men of arms.

My third reservation about the Castro régime concerns what has been going on in the labor movement, especially since November 1959. Since the leaders of the Confederation of Workers of Cuba and of most of its constituent unions had worked hand-in-glove with Batista during the last years of the dictatorship, it was logical that the triumph of the Revolution brought about a complete overturning of the leadership of the labor movement. On January 1, 1959, underground leaders in the unions seized union headquarters and installed themselves as provisional leaders. Membership meetings in the following weeks confirmed most of these people as temporary union officials, and secret elections between April and June resulted in the great majority of them becoming permanent leaders.

The overwhelming majority of the new union leaders were members of the 26th of July Movement, and in many cases they defeated opposition lists influenced or controlled by Communists. The anti-Communist leanings of most of them were clear. Equally clear was their determination to keep the CTC in the world free trade union movement. However, strange events occurred during the CTC Congress in November. The meeting was marked by much shouting and physical violence, between 26th of July people and Communists and those working with them. Two decisions were forced on the delegates. The first was to have the CTC retire from the ICFTU and ORIT (its regional group) and take leadership in forming a new Latin-American labor confederation without United States or Canadian participation, in conformity with the hemispheric line of the Communists. The second was the election of a new executive committee of the CTC, which removed most of the most outspoken anti-Communists and gave key posts to those who had worked with the Communists.

Since the CTC Congress, the new executive committee has established a special purge group, which, in the name of ousting collaborators with Batista, is getting rid of all of the 26th of July leaders of national unions who were outspoken against the Communists during the first months of the Castro régime. There were no Batista collaborators left after January 1, 1959, so those being purged are overwhelmingly loyal Castro people who had carried the brunt of the fight against the dictatorship in the underground. The chief beneficiaries of this purge

are going to be the Communists, who only threw in their lot with the Revolution in the last months of the fighting, when they became convinced that Castro was sure to win.

A fourth aspect of the Castro régime which appears questionable is its apparent eagerness to pick quarrels with elements of the democratic left elsewhere in Latin America. Within a few weeks of coming to power, Castro had a violent public dispute with ex-President José Figueres of Costa Rica, which was partly Figueres' fault, but largely Castro's. Subsequently, Castro and others of the régime have gone out of their way to make vicious attacks on Governor Luis Muñoz Marín of Puerto Rico. They have also been rather coldly formal towards President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela, and have seemed eager to encourage his opponents within his own *Acción Democrática* party.

The Castro people have acted this way in spite of the very extensive moral, financial and material help which the democratic left extended to the Cuban Revolution between 1956 and 1959 and the virtually unanimous public support it has given the Castro régime (with the partial exception of Figueres, who has replied somewhat caustically to the personal attacks on him made by Castro and others).

Finally, this writer has doubts about the recent vituperative attacks by Castro and others against the United States. If this attitude had been assumed by Castro immediately after coming to power, it would have been readily understandable, because he and all Cuban revolutionaries had good reason to dislike the United States, in view of its open help to Batista throughout the civil war. However, in the first months of his régime, Castro gave every indication that he wanted the friendship of this country, particularly the support of the democratic left here, and generally was willing to let bygones be bygones.

Castro's attitude towards the United States shifted violently in the latter months of 1959. He and the Cuban government seem to be seeking to provoke the United States into some kind of retaliation, at a time when the United States Sugar Act is up for renewal and when there is already great pressure to reduce Cuba's quota in the United States market.

These contradictions cannot help but leave an outsider somewhat perplexed, and raise questions about the direction in which the Cuban Revolution is likely to go. However, it would be entirely wrong at this time for liberals and socialists of the United States to become hostile to Castro's government. His advent to power is one of the most important events to occur in the hemisphere in many years. It is important for the future of the whole New World that the Cuban Revolution go in a democratic direction; we can aid this more by an attitude of sympathetic understanding than by one of violent criticism.

CUBAN MICROCOSM

Douglas Gorsline

A SEARCH for sun and warmth recently took this innocent gringo to Cuba where splendid quarters with a harbor view were advertised for a mere twenty dollars, as against Florida's prohibitive sixty. I am a painter, and during our ten-day stay I was drawing constantly in many parts of Havana. This provided a unique opportunity to meet many categories of its citizens. Through connections, we were able to meet socially with Americans in business in Cuba and several Cubans importantly engaged in the Castro government. The result was very little sun and much talk. If it is a vacation you want, I couldn't recommend Cuba more. The scarcity of tourists, unfortunate for the Cubans, is refreshing to us. Havana is once more a Cuban city. But our emotional rewards were more memorable than the vacation facilities, marvelous as they are.

Cuba positively reeks of freedom. We were caught up in its heady atmosphere almost from the moment of landing. It is an amazing experience for the jaded American to find a country and a people in such a state of euphoria. It was like Paris just liberated or Ghana freed must have been, perhaps even like New York immediately after victory in our own revolution. Only in a liberated city could there be such instant, happy acquaintance. Enthusiasm easily surmounts the language barrier. To ask direction of a stranger is to attract a helpful small crowd; to sit on a park bench, have a drink in a bar, or stand in a queue is to make friends.

You see a great many long-haired young soldiers and veteran *barbudos* (the bearded ones), each with his hip-slung .45, or tommy gun. Yet you feel no fear, because it is obvious that the Cubans themselves do not fear them. They have the air of guardians of the revolution, not oppressors, and are regarded with affection and pride. At least while we were there, not a shot was fired in anger, nor did we hear personally an anti-American remark. True there were such questions as "Why isn't your government helping us in this difficult time?" and "Don't you realize that this is the first real taste of freedom our generation has ever had?" It is one of Cuba's paradoxes that despite the Cubans' frustration with American official policy, Americans are treated with astounding cordiality. One Sunday afternoon we found ourselves in a small Cuban restaurant, the only Americans among a considerable and very festive group of Cubans. From their actions we gathered that there was a wedding party or anniversary going on. We were gradually drawn into the mood, and when they joyously rose to sing their new anthem, the *26th of July Hymn*, we could not but stand too, and pretend we knew the

words. To our amazement, and both smiling and tearful, they promptly sang the *Star Spangled Banner* in our honor. It was a very affecting moment, and afterwards we were buried in embraces, while innumerable toasts were offered and autographs were exchanged. How can one resist such a people?

We had the same kind of reception in the homes of upper-class Cubans, who, contrary to reports we had heard in the United States, are fervently committed to the revolution. If Cuba is a police state, there is a puzzling lack of fear of the police. If it is ruled by the army, there seems to be no objection at present; the army is thought of as a necessary concomitant to consolidating the revolution. And in a state fabled for its venality, we found a positively puritan scrupulosity as to money. Even an American business executive, sadly contemplating his company's fiscal future in Cuba, admitted, "You've got to give them one thing; this government is incorruptible!"

Because of this pervasive aura of liberation, we repressed our former fears as to Cuba's political trends, and our Northern doubts as to Castro's grasp of due process. We saw the *present*, the *actual*, the *accomplished*. At this moment, in Cuba, her yoke of oppression has been lifted. One day the shadows may lengthen again across this sunny land; the next few years will tell that story. But if ever there was a determined impulse toward true freedom, it exists in Cuba. Let us pray that Camus' "limits" will be operative.



To those who have not been in Cuba recently, the above remarks may seem gullible or too enthusiastic; it may be said that I am not sufficiently informed as to the possible lack of civil and legal protections now existing in Cuba. I am not a trained analyst of political systems, nor a lawyer steeped in Blackstone. Certain key civil protections *have* lapsed in Cuba today, if they ever existed, and that island is ruled by Fidel, together with certain men around him. What of this?

Cuba is a microcosm of events all over the world, in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East—in fact wherever one looks. My reply to more expert reservations about political events in all these places is that they are indubitably *happening*. Similar events are also taking place in our own United States. The Negro, by radical use of the nonviolent weapon, proposes to force the white American to submit to the human actuality of a Supreme Court legalism. America is fortunate that the spiritual grasp on reality of a formerly excluded minority has emerged in a nonviolent form. This does not make the means of the Negro any less radical. These people insist, at whatever personal cost, upon a human aspiration. Among Cubans, this insistence is as intense, and the seemingly violent means are no more radical. Violence seemed to the Cubans to have been imposed by the inhuman brutality of the former régime, which counted twenty thousand tortured dead during its last two years in power. It is in this light that one must read the number of those executed since Castro attained power and judge the motivations toward violence.

In equating the radicalism of the American and African Negroes and the Cuban liberators, I bemoan the necessities of history which allow some to fight non-violently and force the others to fight violently. This still does not alter the event. And this radical necessity will persist all over the world, no matter what position the two materialist bosses, Russia and America, take.

So far, we in America are taking one position, that Cuba appears to be Communist in drift; therefore do nothing. It is a paradox to find this position taken not only by the fat élite of business and politics, but by the non-Communist left as well; the one is characteristically materialist, the other ethically timid. One is forced to appeal to the subterranean frustration of the average citizen, and hope that his gaze will penetrate beneath the words in Cuba, in Alabama, and in Africa. As Castro has said, "Cubans are devoted to neither Communism nor capitalism; they are only Cubans." But he also said something like: "Risk all or lose all!" Isn't that all any of these people are saying?

The American political situation is so hopelessly opaque that it is useless to inveigh against it. There is not now, nor does there seem to be developing, any rational grasp of these dynamics. Perhaps as time goes on, as inexorable events proceed despite our bungling,

the average citizen will recognize beneath the expletives that all these different peoples are wishing and fighting for freedom *by whatever means are available*. If the Latin Americans are forced to go their own way without our help, we can rely upon them to do it without shedding a tear for the poor United States, isolated in her own teeming hemisphere. And we will be able to congratulate ourselves on having had the good sense to go on bucking the nigger here back home, all by ourselves.

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Intellectuals & the Lonely Union Reformer

H. W. BENSON

ONCE THERE WAS a strong link of solidarity between the intellectual and the working class, but that link is broken, for this is the era of the intellectual's disenchantment with labor. The intellectual has not exactly lost interest in the labor movement. The character of his interest, however, has been transformed. The lawyer finds that official labor makes a fine client, and he serves it diligently for the customary fee. The writer has graduated from unions into the universities, and he there pursues labor, which he knew so well, as a convenient subject for historical research and sociological interrogation, approaching it as raw material for a doctoral thesis. No longer the fiery spirit of commitment and attachment, but the cold, detached, aloof gaze of the sociological quiz kid. The publicity man, the research worker, the editor, and the educator all serve labor—but with a different spirit; they come often as employees and sometimes with cynicism.

What happened?

From radicals and ex-radicals comes a facile reply: then we were Marxists, or Leninists, or Trotskyists, or plain red-hot socialists. And in the youth of our varying dogmas, we dreamed of the proletarian, pure, democratic, progressive, who would liberate all mankind. Labor, yearning to be free, would at last liberate humanity. But it was a fantasy. Now, with experience and maturity we face the sordid reality. Once we saw the noble worker, muscles bulging, breaking the chains of capitalism across his mighty biceps. Now, we still see the bulging muscles; but we notice a small head and there are no chains breaking. Marxism and the idealization of the working class have been outlived; naturally, we re-evaluate the labor movement.

From those with a less fervid past comes another explanation, more sociological, less political, but in essence the same. Unionism, it is said, has been "institutionalized"; instead of being a mighty mass movement on behalf of the underdog, it has become a bureaucratized pressure group, uninterested in the great causes of peace, freedom, and progress, striving for private advantage, often in collusion with Big Business at the expense of the public. And (so the notion goes) while we can sympathize with an occasional union demand, we can hardly give serious attention to unionism as a movement for democracy.

From these standpoints, the working class has let down the intellectual and doomed his youthful hopes to disappointment; and if the radical shrugs off the labor movement, it is, he imagines, essentially because that movement has not proved worthy of his great trust in it.

It might all ring true except for this: if the Working Class (capital W) has "failed"; if the Labor Movement (capital L) is a disappointment, there remain nonetheless thousands of men within the unions, rank-and-filers, shop-level leaders, who persist in pressing for democracy and decency within their unions. The intellectual is disenchanted with institutions which, he is convinced, curb and discourage democracy; at any rate, they have no need of his help and no call on his sympathies. But what of those men who fight on from below for democracy? The radical intellectual casts them, too, into the shadows. The union democrat must fight on, alone, unaided, unknown. If it is proper for decent unionists to call for a change in the labor movement—and it is—it is no less proper to call upon the intellectual to fulfill his own responsibility to those who stand for democracy in that movement.

There are rank-and-file union reformers, many of them. This simple declaration of fact must be underlined, because there is almost no one who records their story. Writers on labor are normally busy with other things. Sometimes there comes along a book like *Labor U. S. A.*, by Lester Velie, who, with sympathy, admiration and veracity, tells of some of these men who strive to refurbish the unions. But such a book is a rarity and is received with supercilious tolerance by reviewers.

Four years ago, a rank-and-file reform group succeeded in ousting a corrupt clique of business agents from Lodge 113 of the International Association of Machinists in Chicago. But I.A.M. President A. J. Hayes, perturbed by this eruption of grass-roots democracy, put the lodge under trusteeship, just to be safe. Literature distribution and the circulation of petitions in the union were outlawed. The reform group persisted in the demand for democracy and autonomy. When two of its leaders offered a resolution for public review boards at a 1958 A.F.L.-C.I.O. state convention, Hayes had them tried by a special committee appointed by himself. The trial committee's report remained secret; not even the defendants have ever learned what its verdict was. Hayes was not satisfied; for he set it aside and personally ordered the expulsion of the two critics. After three years of trusteeship, expulsions, threats, uncontrolled manipulation by the union's national office, the use of the official local press to attack the reformers, and a contemptible and futile effort to denounce them as reds before the House Un-American Activities Committee, Hayes felt that it was safe to restore the lodge's autonomy and call elections. Nonetheless, the reform group won 48% of the votes. In January of this year, the re-

formers elected twelve of the fourteen committee members and delegates chosen at a big membership meeting.

The reformers of Lodge 113 did not surrender, even after five years, because they are dedicated union democrats. In the last year, they were encouraged by liberal public opinion. Well-known pro-labor intellectuals sent letters of protest to George Meany and to the I.A.M. Articles appeared in the *Reporter* and the *Progressive*. The national office of the American Civil Liberties Union took an active interest in the case. Rank-and-filers got some free legal advice, and a committee of prominent liberals was ready to intervene on their behalf if an effective recourse to the courts seemed possible. But the two principal leaders, Marion Cieply and Irwin Rappaport, have not been reinstated. It took a long time to get their story to the attention of the liberal world. Now the danger is that it will be forgotten.

When top I.A.M. officials cooperated with the House Un-American Activities Committee to investigate Lodge 113 last year, one of their aims was to defame a former lodge president, Albert Dency, who had become one of the reform leaders. What they had thought would be a bombshell turned out to be a dud. Dency testified under oath that he had never been a member of the Communist Party; but another witness, Ed Alexander, an admitted former Communist, reported that the C.P. had supported Hayes rather than the insurgents and had been bitterly hostile to the Lodge 113 reform movement. Alexander himself had been expelled from the party because he insisted on supporting the Dency group.

When Dency was subpoenaed by the committee, he shopped around for a lawyer and discovered that it would cost him \$500 for one-shot representation at the hearings. That would have been five weeks' wages for ten minutes of legal presence. This was a democratic luxury he couldn't afford, so he had to go without counsel. Since there were no big constitutional issues at stake, the matter lay outside the chosen purview of the local branch of the A.C.L.U.

Now, for the sake of argument, let us grant that labor is institutionalized, that Marxism is dead, and that illusions are illusions. But the case of Lodge 113 raises less philosophical issues. Why was the story frozen out of the press for four years? Why couldn't Dency get a lawyer? He is not institutionalized; he is a militant union democrat. The explanation, of course, is horribly primitive. The liberal lawyer, skilled at labor affairs, eye cocked at the union official, will not lightly offend a potential client; the liberal office-holder will not risk antagonizing an influential probable supporter; the professor will not endanger the source of funds that might finance projects of great value to humanity; the research worker will not imperil his access to labor archives; the top-flight reporter will not cut off the flow of inside stories and possible scoops (on safer subjects); the union staff

intellectual will see the dismissal axe ever poised.

Where, then, and to whom can the embattled rank-and-filer turn for assistance? The answer is depressing:

To make democratic constitutional precedent, go to the A.C.L.U. To defend workers against governmental interference and employer aggression, go to the Workers Defense League. To protest nuclear testing, go to SANE or to *LIBERATION*. To fight for civil rights, go to the N.A.A.C.P. To change the nature of our social system, go to the Socialist Party. There is help for every cause . . . unless you are a union reformer.

In decent unions, like the United Auto Workers or the International Typographical Union, the local member can usually count on his own international. But in an international whose officialdom is corrupt or undemocratic, there is virtually nowhere to turn for help, for advice, for encouragement—no decent labor leader, no progressive-minded attorney, no liberal writer. The union democrat stands isolated and alone, faced by an adversary with millions of dollars at his disposal.

The union reformer feels himself part of a liberal community of labor leaders, public officials, radicals, intellectuals, and writers. Inspired by their proclaimed democratic ideals, he reacts with indignation against corruption and dictatorship in his union, and the rhetoric of liberalism rings in his mind as he rises to demand a change. When he begins, it seems simple; but he quickly discovers that his protests have plunged him into a difficult and complicated battle.

If he is to persist, if he is to risk his job, face discrimination and sometimes physical danger, he has to have the overwhelming conviction that he is right. He has to hear the call, loud and clear, from those whom he respects: the pro-labor intellectual, the decent labor leader, the democratic-minded public. He must have open moral support; not merely private sighs of sympathy, but vociferous, articulate, forceful, widespread public acclamation; an unambiguous declaration that the democratic union reformers are right and those repressing them wrong. In short, the union militant needs support in its most elemental form.

The outside intellectual or professional can make the difference between encouraging success and demoralizing defeat. Liberal lawyers, professors, writers, and others have helped effectively in enough instances to prove that such help could be given on a far wider scale. The case of Lodge 113 was one outstanding example. There was another in maritime. In New York, when five men were expelled from Local 88 of the Masters, Mates, and Pilots Union for the simple act of forming an opposition caucus, they went to Attorney John Harold. By luck, he was not an ex-radical; in his ignorance, he did not know that the labor movement had exhausted its potential; and he was unaware that he was therefore morally entitled to dismiss these reformers with an

annoyed shrug or, as an acceptable alternative, to suggest a respectable, non-ideological retainer. He thought that they were right and he felt obligated to come to their assistance. He served without fee for seven years! If only for this, the case was unique in recent labor history. It was Harold's skill that turned the trick in court. Obviously, no single lawyer could afford to build a practice out of such cases; he would soon go bankrupt. But each lawyer could take one. With the help of Harold, the Local 88 reformers won reinstatement and back pay; they won the restoration of autonomy for their suspended local; and they got elections, rigidly and honestly supervised by an outside referee. The men of Local 88 are persistent rank-and-file democrats; without their determination and sacrifices, the cause would have been abandoned. And without the help of Harold, they might have found it hopeless. It was that combination, of militant union democrat and socially conscious professional, that prevailed over corruption and bureaucracy in an important sector of the labor movement.

This seven-year struggle received only trivial mention in the press, even though the international and local president whom it opposed finally went to jail for selling jobs. So it goes: in locals of the Teamsters Union, in the International Union of Operating Engineers, and in the Boilermakers Union, there have been strong movements for democracy and decency, only a sample of stirrings among union members everywhere.

Then there is the other side of the picture. Enormous human effort and impressive quantities of money are expended on labor as a subject for academic study. No less than seventy-five experts have been probing the multifarious facets of union life for the trade-union project of the Fund for the Republic. Soon there will come an enormous printed outpouring of the fruits of diligent research, focused particularly on unionism's impact upon democracy. Expenses will probably total over a million dollars.

Meanwhile, thousands of lawyers busy themselves with the legal business of union clients; their charges doubtless run into millions. Add the writers, publicity directors, editors, educators, lecturers, professors who address union conferences, research directors; you have a substantial little army of liberal and radical intellectuals immersed in labor affairs.

This is not intended, even by implication, as a slur on funds, grants, foundations, and worthy projects, even though they have nothing to do with assisting those who fight for union democracy. There are other things to be done, too; and those who are attached to projects and jobs must, naturally, stick to their assigned and defined tasks. Still, sometimes it does seem that the investigation of the decline of union democracy has itself become big business; we have, then, the four Bigs: Big Business, Big Labor, Big Government, and Big Research into union democracy. In all this dedication to pure thought,

in all this expenditure of cash, the rank-and-file unionist can't get a dime! For heaven's sake, why doesn't someone organize a project or establish a fund to help the poor union reformer? So far, it seems to be far more rewarding to study union democracy than to help it.

After tens of thousands of pages of testimony during ten years before congressional committees, after profuse cluckings of public outrage, only a single institution has arisen to give practical assistance to union democracy. Last year, a small group of eminent intellectuals established the Election Institute to conduct fair and impartial elections in private organizations. But it can intervene only when a union formally and officially invites it; enormous public and membership pressure would be necessary to get it in where it is needed most.

The problem is too vast for any small assortment of random individuals; and there are no foundations and no grants to help. Until an adequate force can be mobilized behind the lonely union reformer. I suggest a moral stopgap, taking example from the medical profession. Doctors make a lot of money. A surgeon will take perhaps a thousand dollars for removing a rich man's appendix with meticulous care. He will charge a few hundred for slicing out mine. Then, in self-justification, he will hack out a pauper's for nothing. For every week of collecting high fees at his private office, the doctor feels obliged to donate a few hours to the clinic. All this is hardly the solution to the nation's health problem. But let us grant at least this: the medical profession has enough sensitivity to public opinion to make the proper gesture of deferential hypocrisy. It is not much. But it is more than the liberal intellectual does for the rank-and-file union reformer.

Why not a free clinic, so to speak, for the unionist? Let every liberal lawyer who makes his living out of the labor movement devote his services free to one (only one) insurgent group fighting against corruption. Let every civil-liberties institution seriously and publicly take up one (just one) important case of union democracy. Let every labor writer compose one article (paid or unpaid) out of every dozen to tell the story of union reformers. Let the idea man, the public-relations expert assume the duty of aiding and advising (incognito, perhaps) just one democratic opposition movement. How quickly the inner mood of unionism would change! If they will not do it out of idealism, let it be out of simple charity. If the liberal intellectual cannot share a genuine solidarity with the rank-and-file reformer, let there be *noblesse oblige*. "Not Marxism but philanthropy" could be the watchword of our day.

There are decent labor leaders and union militants who would like to exorcise rackets and spur on union democracy; they need the goad of liberal public opinion and the moral encouragement of the radical. Here again is the opportunity to begin restoring the link between intellectual and union idealist.

NOT SO LONG AGO

A. J. MUSTE

Autobiography: Part 23

My Affair With the Internal Revenue Bureau

ON MARCH 15, 1960, I was tried before Judge Craig Atkins in the United States Tax Court in New York on the charge that during the five years, 1948-52, I had "defrauded" the government by failing to pay *circa* twelve hundred dollars in Federal income taxes, and that I owed the government a like amount in interest and fines for failure to pay taxes. In describing here my affair with the Internal Revenue Bureau, I am taking a leap of twenty-four years from the latest chapter of this autobiography to appear in *LIBERATION*, but the question of tax refusal is an important one at this moment, to which the logic of chronology must yield.

An amusing and startling illustration of the well-known fact that taxes irk the American people and an illustration at the same time of a typical contemporary amoral or immoral device for getting rid of the bother, appeared the day after my trial as an advertisement in the *New York Times*. The ad was not a large one and might not have caught my attention but for its headline: DON'T SHOOT THE TAX COLLECTOR. This was followed by a parenthesis: "Just put him out of business."

How to Evade Taxes

The ad had been placed in the *Times* by its not necessarily esteemed contemporary, the *Daily News*. It told about an address which Representative Paul A. Fino (Rep.-N. Y.) had made recently in the House of Representatives, in which he pointed out that a national lottery would "bring \$10 billion in new revenue to our government." The *News* went on to exclaim about what a lottery would do to lower income taxes and to point with pride to the fact that it had carried Rep. Fino's speech as a guest editorial. It concluded by stating that the *News* carried "timely editorials" treating "the facts, dollars and sense of life" all the time. Provided you view life and taxes and war from a certain angle, Rep. Fino's approach has advantages over that of the conscientious tax refusers! But the tax refusers have their own angle on many questions, including the relation among "the facts, dollars and sense of life."

Not to go back into the history of tax protest and refusal, which would involve comment on such indubitably American events as the Boston Tea Party and such indubitably American characters as Henry David Thoreau, among pacifists in the United States in the years immediately following World War II the question of what to do about paying taxes for a war budget was freely agitated. Obviously, no consistent pacifist who stops to

reflect for a moment can fail to be troubled about paying money for war purposes. As a pacifist conscientious objector, he cannot serve in the armed forces. It is equally impossible for him to produce H-bombs, even if someone else drops them on an enemy country. It is likewise impossible for him to advance the money for H-bombs, even if someone else makes them for someone else to annihilate a city with. If a government's tax system were set up in such a way that it levied taxes for such purposes as health, education and roads, and it then enacted a law to collect a separate tax for nuclear and biological weapons production, the above statements would be obvious, and I surmise that great numbers of pacifists would no longer hand out, simply because a government demanded it, the money that goes straight into war production.

Civil disobedience in this context would not constitute a perplexing problem, raising complicated issues of obedience to "the powers that be," but would be as natural and inevitable as it is for a Mennonite C.O. to refuse induction into the armed forces, or a seventeenth-century Quaker to insist on holding a meeting for worship forbidden by the state, or a Roman Catholic priest to say the Mass secretly for his people in a land where that is forbidden.

Complications

What complicates the situation for taxpayers with uneasy consciences is, firstly, that the United States government has a single budget, which includes all items, and that there is a single treasury, into which all Federal funds go. Shall a man or woman then withhold from the government the sixty per cent or so which goes specifically for war purposes? If so, he or she is still faced with the fact that sixty per cent of the reduced amount paid goes for war purposes. Moreover, if he or she has a bank account or is earning wages or salary, the government can quite readily collect the money. At that point, the question arises whether temporary refusal to pay is more than a gesture, which gives one some inner satisfaction but achieves no social purpose, especially since "tax refusal" on this level—or perhaps on any—may have little or no actual economic effect. To this question one may answer that it is still much better, *especially in a society which is geared to inducing conformity and making protest difficult*, to register some protest which makes one's neighbors, and also the public (if only enough concerned pacifists practise it) pause

and think, than it is to let the hideous business of collecting billions for nuclear-war purposes go on smoothly without a voice being raised against it at the crucial moment when payment is demanded.

The Non-Cooperators

The form, and in some degree the character, of the tax-refusal act is altered by those, like Maurice McCrackin, Juanita Nelson and Eroseanna Robinson, who are moved to refuse to cooperate with the authorities in the legal processes related to collection of taxes, refusing to come to court, standing mute when brought there, etc. This position—that no government has any business to inquire into a person's income, to call upon his time, and so on, as part of the process by which it raises a budget for nuclear and biological warfare and coerces people into paying for such purposes—seems to me a perfectly valid one. It is the basis of my own refusal for ten years now to file Federal income tax returns. I have profound respect for those who with a pure heart and under deep conviction follow the non-cooperation course. As I shall demonstrate, I have not taken it, except in the matter of filing returns, because in the main I regard certain institutions of so-called democratic societies as useful and necessary, and because I have wanted to make an effort to secure a judicial determination on the specific issue of whether or not conscientious objection to paying war taxes should be recognized by a democratic government.

Some pacifists strive to carry tax refusal beyond the "gesture" stage by deliberately keeping their income down to a point where they owe no taxes. In part, this is done to circumvent another difficulty which governmental machinery plants in the way of anyone who has a tender conscience about paying war taxes: the device by which employers are forced to withhold the Federal income tax. This takes the decision whether to pay or not to pay out of the individual's hands, unless he is self-employed, or keeps his income below taxable level.

Keeping one's income down to a subsistence level may in my view be justified on grounds of self-discipline or asceticism, though, as I have set forth in another installment of this autobiography, it is not the pattern of life which I have chosen or regard as superior to a less ascetic one. Voluntarily keeping one's income down does not commend itself to me as a form of tax protest. I do not see how one can in effect recognize that a government may determine one's standard of living or think that permitting government to do so constitutes a significant protest against war taxation.

It was in connection with the problem of withholding of a staff member's income by a pacifist organization that my own thinking about tax refusal was forced to a decision to act, a couple of years after the close of World War II. I was national secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation; my secretary was Marion Coddington,

who later married Ernest Bromley, editor of the *Peacemaker*. Marion came to the conclusion that she could not conscientiously continue to pay Federal income tax.

F.O.R. and Withholding

The F.O.R. appointed a representative committee to consider the matter. Consultation with lawyers made it clear that the organization was definitely obligated by law to withhold the taxes of all employees except ordained ministers. If it failed to withhold, its officers and members were subject to various penalties (it was and is unincorporated), its funds could be levied upon, the right to have contributions made to it tax-exempt could be withdrawn, etc. My own opinion was that an organization composed of conscientious objectors should not place itself in a position of confronting a staff member who had a sensitive conscience about paying war taxes with the choice between being forced to pay because the tax was withheld and resigning from the staff. I was also of the opinion that if an organization like F.O.R. openly announced to the authorities that it could not in good conscience withhold in such a case, it was unlikely that they would make an issue of it. My reasoning was and is that the Internal Revenue Bureau is primarily interested in getting the money, and would take steps to collect from the tax refuser. It would not, where so little money was involved, want to embark on what would come close to religious persecution and would provide the prosecuted organization with a good deal of free publicity. I further surmised that if the government should take a tough course and the organization were, e.g., deprived of tax exemption on contributions to it, the result would be to strengthen morale and increase financial support, rather than reduce it.

At its first meeting, the F.O.R. committee members were "under the weight", as Quakers might say, of the argument that as conscientious objectors they should not thwart Marion Coddington in her desire to make her own decision not to pay war taxes. At one point toward the close of that session, it appeared that this was "the sense of the meeting." However, it was decided to put off action until another meeting. After many months, the decision was made that F.O.R. should continue to withhold as the law requires. Undoubtedly prudential considerations entered into the decision. I think it is correct, however, to say that what finally dictated the answer was the feeling of committee and council members who did not themselves practise tax refusal that they could not consistently vote that the organization—they in their capacity as members—should violate the law. Marion Coddington resigned her position.

This development was the occasion for my making the decision that I had contemplated for some time, viz., that since F.O.R. was not required to withhold in my case because I am an ordained Presbyterian minister, I should request that withholding cease (in 1948)

and thenceforth refuse to file Federal income-tax returns. My decision—once I embarked on tax refusal—to pay no income tax rather than only that portion which is budgeted for “constructive” purposes, was based on the fact, already mentioned, that a huge percentage of whatever one pays must be thought of as going for war purposes. I wished, moreover, to make my challenge of the government’s right to collect taxes for nuclear war unmistakable. For the same reason, I refused to fill out returns, though I notified the authorities each year of what I was doing and why.

While the occasion, for my becoming a tax refuser was what I have just stated, the basic reason for doing so lay in the course the United States was adopting at that time. It was the period when it became clear that no abatement in the nuclear-weapons race was contemplated, when the Cold War set in, and when the fateful decisions were being made to go beyond atomic weapons to thermonuclear ones and the weapons of “germ warfare” and “gas warfare.” It seemed to me that pacifists had to react to this enormity. At any rate, I could no longer rest easy in the familiar arguments that tax refusal is a complicated business, that it doesn’t deprive the government of any money really, and so on. I am simply incapable of voluntarily doing anything to put income-tax money for these genocidal weapons into the government’s hands.

Since I did not file any return, I.R.B. examiners came around after a while to examine F.O.R. records to determine what taxes I owed. We placed no obstacle in the way of this examination. Except for this, I heard nothing from I.R.B. for more than two years. Then, one June day in 1951, I was asked to come for an interview. For two hours or more, two agents questioned me about my stand, in the presence of a stenographer. I admitted, of course, that I did not pay taxes and frequently urged others not to. The agents were courteous, and seemed interested. At the conclusion of the interview I was asked whether I would be willing to sign the transcript of the conversation, which could be used as evidence against me. I said I would, but that I wanted to read it, of course, so as to be sure what I was putting my name to. One of the agents said: “Fine, we’ll send it to you in a couple of days.” To this day, I have never seen such a document.

Several years passed without my hearing from them. One day, after I had retired as national secretary of F.O.R. and, taking into account my age and other factors, probably did not owe any tax, an agent urged me to sign a return for the preceding year. The intimation was that I did not need to give any figures, just sign my name at the bottom of a return. He argued that failure to do so would defeat my own ends, since if I signed I would owe no tax for the year in question and the government would leave me in peace. If I refused, the government would have to take measures and probably levy

a fine. I told him my conscience would not permit me to compromise in the matter. He said that he had a conscience too, and it wouldn’t permit him to make trouble for a person like me.

Another year, an agent urged me to file a return as—he said—I had done the year before! I was astonished at that statement, and when he insisted that I had filed for the previous year, I wondered for a moment whether someone had filed for me. When I continued to protest that I had not filed for years, he pulled a document out of his files and showed it to me. It was the return of my son John and his wife, who also lived in New York that year! To this day I do not know whether this was a case of honest bureaucratic confusion or whether the agent wanted to get me to sign something—anything—to give the impression that everything was in order and the case closed.

Again some time elapsed, and then, in 1956, I got a letter stating that the statute of limitations might soon come into effect, that they had not yet finished computing what I owed for certain years, and asking if I would sign a paper giving them more time. It is hard not to speculate that they were offering me a way to get off the hook, so to speak. If so, I disappointed them. I signed and sent a covering letter saying that, as they well knew, I had no intention of paying any tax, but that if they needed more time to calculate what they thought I owed, I was perfectly willing to grant it.

After another year or so, there came an interview with a top-echelon I.R.B. agent. By this time the bureau had completed its computation. We had a pleasant talk. At its conclusion, the official said that he had no choice but to pass the case on to the Federal tax court—or resign!

This time it looked as though the pace was to be quickened. Harrop Freeman, of the Cornell University law school, attorney in many C.O. cases and a tax expert, and I were called fairly soon before an I.R.B. attorney. Freeman went over the case with him, ridiculing the idea that any “fraud” was being practised on the government. The I.R.B. attorney said that the case would go on the calendar of the tax court.

We arrived in Tax Court at last on March 15th. The I.R.B. attorney, in his cross-questioning, gave me plenty of opportunity to state my views, both religious and political. Norman Thomas and John Nevin Sayre were character witnesses. Harrop Freeman thinks we made an excellent record for appeal purposes. The attorneys now have the usual sixty days to prepare briefs, and an additional thirty days to study each other’s briefs and comment on them. This takes us to the middle of June. Some time after that, Judge Atkins will render his verdict. If he rules in favor of the I.R.B., we plan to take the case, on the constitutional issue of freedom of religion, to the United States Court of Appeals.

To be continued in next issue.

ALTERNATIVE RIDES AGAIN!

The last two issues of Alternative were confiscated and burned by postal authorities, during the Korean War, "for interfering with the enlistment and recruiting service of the United States, and for impairing morale in the armed forces."

Alternative was one of the few publications that succeeded in going beyond the "in-group" thinking and language that characterize most pacifist publications and in presenting the message of unabashed radicalism to those who did not have much schooling as well as to those who did.

Alternative was put out by a group of libertarian war resisters (including two of the present editors of Liberation), most of whom had met in the prisons and Civilian Public Service camps of World War II. The selections in this booklet were made by a devoted reader of Alternative, Richard Kern, of Brooklyn.

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